



The Forest Resources and Technologies II (FOREST II) Project¹

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FINAL REPORT

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Submitted by
Winrock International

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¹ FOREST II is a ten month extension to the original FOREST Project (2000-2005) and had different key goals and objectives focused primarily on illegal logging.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
I. Introduction.....	4
II. Goals and Objectives	5
III. FOREST II Approach	7
IV. Project Management and Administration	8
A. Phase II Advisory Council.....	8
B. Key Partners – Phase II Extension.....	9
V. FOREST II Task Objectives	9
Objective A. To assist in increasing knowledge of the public in adopting regulations in forest management	9
1. Introduction	9
2. Deliverables, Results and Impact	10
3. Method and Approach.....	11
4. Legacy.....	12
5. Lessons Learned.....	14
Objective B. To assist, to the level permitted by the Russian Government, in reforming regulations affecting activities on forest lands under long-term forest lease, as well as non-leased forest lands	15
1. Introduction	15
2. Deliverables, Results and Impacts.....	16
3. Method and Approach.....	17
4. Legacy.....	17
5. Lessons Learned.....	18
Objective C. To assist in reducing illegal logging practices in the Russian Far East and implementing the FLEG process.....	19
1. Introduction	19
2. Deliverables, Results and Impact	19
3. Method, Approach and Activities	21
4. Legacy.....	24
5. Lessons Learned.....	25
VI. Gender and Minorities.....	26
VII. Indicators	27
VIII. Success Stories.....	28

Executive Summary

Winrock International implemented a 10-month project, known as FOREST II, that was a contractual extension of the original FOREST Project. FOREST II worked in forestry but had a different focus from the original FOREST Project. Working with Russian partners, the goal was to **strengthen the institutional framework for addressing future challenges facing forests to encourage protection and sustainable use of forest resources in Russia**. This extension was based on expressed needs of the Russian Government at the final FOREST Advisory Council Meeting held in Moscow December 2004. While the FOREST Project (2000-2005) had some profound results, both the Russian Government and USAID felt that with a bit more effort, we could have a greater impact on emerging issues in forestry – primarily focused around illegal logging.

FOREST II had several key high-level objectives, notably:

- A. Assisting in widening access, knowledge and collaboration of citizens in adopting regulations in forest management.
- B. Assisting in identifying primary issues with reference to forest lands under long-term lease as well as non-lease forest lands.
- C. Assisting in identifying illegal logging practices in the Russian Far East as well as implementing the Forestry Law Enforcement Governance (FLEG) process.

In working toward fulfilling these objectives, FOREST II informed and educated the public on challenges facing forestry in Russia, created a more enabling environment for sound forestry management, assessed and recommended an allocation system for long-term leases on forest land, and provided recommendations and knowledge on systems which would reduce illegal logging practices in coordination with the FLEG Process.

FOREST II objectives were inextricably linked to each other. For example, local communities became directly involved in reforming the forest sector, with a focus on illegal logging prevention activities, through roundtable discussion trainings which led to public advocacy actions. As a result of our collaboration with government, administration and regional forestry officials were engaged in the public activities organized by FOREST II. This was one of the first instances in which the officials heard the public's voice with reference to forestry, concerns and ideas about issues that affected the communities and allowed them to participate in how to reform the forest sector and prevent illegal logging. People realized how illegal logging had the potential of negatively impacting their quality of life. FOREST II tied together an active group of scientists, timber industry managers, administration and forestry officials and NGOs with the general public. Many of the problems related to illegal logging are strongly tied to forest legislation, corruption, and a closed decision making process which did not take into consideration the ideas, opinions and participation of the general public. As a result, the FOREST II Project built a dialogue with Government Administration on the Federal and Regional level, as well as with non-profit organizations, local government, businesses and other groups. FOREST II then took on a facilitator role – uniting partners' efforts directing towards these primary goals.

With these activities, Winrock and the local partners achieved the following:

- Assisted in carrying out 12 public advocacy events and 10 roundtable discussions with 1830 people involved. More than 68,000 people in the region informed about ongoing reforms and illegal logging issues through mass media and distributed materials and during public events.
- Developed methods for conducting public advocacy events informing people on illegal logging issues and forest management. Local NGOs were trained in applying these methods, which makes them more important players in public advocacy campaigns.
- Conducted seven training seminars and roundtables on which voluntary certification and illegal logging issues in Khabarovsk region were forwarded.
- Engaged more than 520 direct representatives of RFE logging companies, Forest Service specialists, regional administrators and NGOs (as well as university students) to play an active role in open discussions and hearings on the negative influences of illegal logging on economic and social quality of life for communities and the local population.
- Facilitated groups to be actively involved with government in providing feedback in what they believe should be done to eliminate illegal logging practices. Project workshops trained participants in voluntary forest certification, VLT (Verification of Legal Timber) program and FLEG (Forestry Law Enforcement and Governance) process.
- Developed written documents by Russian forestry specialists in areas such as illegal logging, involving the public in forestry management issues, managing leased and non-leased forestry lands, etc.
- Conducted thirteen public advocacy events dedicated to illegal logging in five districts of the Khabarovsk Krai region, educating the local population and getting communities involved. In particular, more than 1550 people from remote forest communities received information regarding illegal logging problems and how this affects their small communities, and were trained in how the general public can work with local government to prevent illegal logging.
- Developed regional standards for a Verification of Legal Timber (VLT) program in coordination with a newly developed Russia Far East Forest Certification Center (Khabarovsk) and the regional government (administration) of Khabarovsk Krai and Regional Forestry Agency. Khabarovsk Krai became the first region in Russia to officially create a VLT program, and is expected to accelerate voluntary certification to local forest industry companies. Furthermore, it also allowed Khabarovsk to begin implementing FLEG mechanisms prior to other regions across Russia.
- Drafted, developed and implemented the first public service announcement for Russia on the issue of Illegal Logging.
- Institutionalized these activities focused around preventing Illegal Logging within Environmental NGOs in the Russian Far East, such as Ecodal, the All Russia Nature Protection Society, etc. This ensures that the work will continue in some form after FOREST II has closed.

FOREST II products include:

- A manual of recommendations on *“How the local population and various agencies responsible for regulating, planning, and managing forest lands can collaborate.”* This document has been submitted and accepted by the Regional Forest Agency, Natural Resources Use and Control Agency, Regional Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Timber Industry. It is estimated that 230 officers of these agencies are now

utilizing these recommendations to develop a strategy of how to build a system of openness and confidence with an aim toward a stronger civil society. In light of the recent development of Law #131, this is particularly important and will be an area that future USAID civil society projects in the RFE will find immense interest of the Russian Government with reference to collaboration and future work.

- During the tenure of our project, a web-site (<http://www.forestlaw.ru>) provided information on the development process of the Forest Code and highlights reforms in the forest sector. This Internet portal covers the new Forest Code and forestry reform, and provided a means of generating open discussion of the forest policy in Russia. With over 4,000 hits into June, 2006, the site provided not only official information about the new Forest Code developed within departments of the Federal Ministry of Economic Development but also displayed alternative forest experts' viewpoints on how the law should be better adapted to meet the needs of Russia. This allowed the general public to experience a range of opinions and expertise and later began to establish the first Forest Code public hearings.
- A guide on "*Regulations on the Silviculture Operations on the Leasehold Lands*" with the assistance of forestry experts from the Russian Far East region. The importance of this work has been resoundingly articulated by the Federal Forest Service authorities as well as forest experts in Khabarovsk region. Forestry specialists noted that the Draft of the new Forest Code, which had been submitted to Federal Duma, contained serious gaps in this area. FOREST II worked with forestry experts to propose a bylaw addendum to the code focused on these gaps and suggest proper maintenance of silvicultural operations by leaseholders. These recommendations reflect not only the rights and duties but also outline the mutual responsibilities of leaseholders and state agencies in maintaining regulations and management under lease agreements. The document has now been submitted to Federal and regional authorities and we anticipate that the document will widen draft updates of the Federal Forest Code.
- The manual "*What Every Leaseholder Should Know?*" was developed with FOREST II assistance and experts from the timber industry, forestry research institutes and Regional Forest Service. The document provides essential information on technological approaches, ecological considerations, practical and legal issues arising due to changes in Federal legislation and current forest reforms. Attached to the manual is a CD which highlights laws, regulations and norms, and refers to key parts of the text.
- A document that analyzes different aspects of illegal logging including volume, types, forms, and social impact of illegal logging in Khabarovsk Krai. This document received recognition from regional authorities due to the sound economic analysis that showed tax revenue lost to the Krai thereby affecting the quality of life for local citizens. Information contained in this analysis is to be used by the Regional Forest Agency and local authorities to develop measures to counter illegal logging in Khabarovsk Krai.
- A brochure to educate a greater number of people about the problems with illegal logging. This was based on the public education methodologies from the original FOREST Project's Fire Prevention component, working with the Regional Forest Agency. This work has been adapted in the Regional Forest Agency and has become the basis for a series of seminars they have run throughout the Far East regions. It is now envisioned that this work will become an obligatory tool used by Federal and regional agencies and administrations, in working to solve the problem of illegal logging.

- A Public Service Announcement (PSA) on the issue of illegal logging was been developed for Khabarovsk Krai region, in cooperation with “Veles” television company. The video clip has been aired and informs citizens of the negative consequences of illegal logging with specific regard to the ecology, economy and quality of life for forest communities and the overall region. FOREST II has transferred the announcement to the regional administration of Khabarovsk Krai to be aired throughout the krai on all television stations as well as at public advocacy events.

I. Introduction

The Russian Far East has a tremendous stock of natural resources that can significantly contribute to regional development, economic growth and the civil society development of Russia. Forestry resources are a unique natural resource because they are ubiquitous across all the areas/regions of the Russian Far East, renewable if managed sustainably, and can economically benefit individuals, households, rural and urban communities, SMEs and large companies. As well, the forest is something Russians feel strongly about – protecting their environment and properly developing and utilizing it in a sustainable manner. This presents an opportunity to assist in civil society development, rule of law and advocacy in an area that can make significant impact.

Russia holds 22% of the worlds’ forests and 21% of the world’s standing timber. In 2004, the forestry sector accounted for approximately 248 billion Rubles in GDP for Russia, but more profoundly is that forestry touches upon the regions like no other sector and is integral to regional development and creating a civil society --- forestry accounts for 27% of employment in Siberia and over 30% in the Russian Far East, and holds 30% of the exports from both of these regions. In addition, this unique ecosystem houses fauna and flora found nowhere else in the world, in many cases with special medicinal properties. Russian forests are valuable for the timber, non-timber products and unique species; within the woody and herbaceous forest undergrowth are effective new medicines. If managed appropriately and sustainably with local people’s involvement, the forest resources in Russia can be the engine of economic and civil society development in the Far East.

Currently however, the forestry sector and forest management is faced with significant challenges. Forestry companies do not always follow principles of sustainable management. A new draft of the Forest Code recently submitted by the Government of the Russian Federation (Federal Duma) will implement a number of new and important innovations completely changing existing forest management systems in Russia. In general, the proposed changes attempt to introduce market principles into the forest sector, but leave many environmental issues unanswered. Many Russian experts and NGOs believe that the new Forest Code will not promote sustainable forest management, and further emphasize that the draft does not protect the citizens’ use of the forest. Some suggest that adoption of the new Forest Code poses a threat for the forest ecosystems and will result in a decrease in forestry management, reduced control of the resource and potentially increase illegal logging.

Existing forestry policy does not encourage development of a stable industry, and indeed legislation and forestry practices often are resulting in poor overall management and degradation of the resource. Moreover illegal logging poses a threat to the Russian and global economy. Harvesting of illegal timber harms the ecosystem, undermines legitimately harvested and traded timber, and hurts the Russian economy with losses in taxes and jobs. President Putin is aware of this problem and has now identified the issue of ‘unauthorized cutting’ of forestry resources as a growing problem which must warrant further attention and resources in the Russian Federation.

FOREST II worked to create partnerships with the Russian Federation’s Ministry of Natural Resources, regional Krai representatives, and NGOs to address some of these issues. This report summarizes the work of FOREST II in the 10-month period following the original FOREST Project.²

II. Goals and Objectives

The second phase of the FOREST Project (FOREST II) **strengthened the institutional framework for addressing future challenges facing forests to encourage protection and sustainable use of forest resources in Russia**, by working in Khabarovsk Krai and closely with the Federal Ministry of Forestry. Recommendations and lessons learned in Khabarovsk are directly applicable to other kraies, republics and oblasts throughout Russia. Winrock also promoted the role of forests and the forest sector in civil society development of the Russian Far East and assisted the region to identify the factors that negatively influence the development of this key sector of the economy.

One of the original key activities was to advise and work with the Ministry on how to adopt the new Forest Code. However, the Forest Code proved to have challenges and it has yet to be passed into law. The Forest Code continues to be a discussion point in government. Despite this, the FOREST II Project was flexible in its approach and was able to provide value to the government and the industry by analyzing gaps and challenges in the field of forestry, in areas such as involving the public in the process, management of leased and non-leased forested lands and illegal logging. Thus, similar to the original FOREST Project, FOREST II focused on sustainable forestry issues which would have an impact, particularly focused on the regional aspects of forest management and the law, and on local governance. Winrock International then coordinated these activities with the Russian Government, FLEG (Forestry Law Enforcement Governance) Initiative, forestry agencies, regional administration, NGOs, USAID and other projects in the region.

This Project focused on:

- A. Informing and educating the public and assessing the challenges facing forestry in Russia.**
- B. Creating an enabling environment for sound forestry management.**
- C. Assessing and recommending an allocation system for long-term leases on forest land.**

² The Final Report for the original FOREST Project was from July 21, 2000, until July 20, 2005. This was previously submitted and approved by USAID.

D. Providing recommendations on reducing illegal logging practices in coordination with the FLEG Process.

Winrock used participatory processes with the various stakeholders to produce recommendations to the Ministry on how to address the above-mentioned issues. The project focused in Khabarovsk Krai, with close coordination with the Federal Forest Agency in Moscow. The project collaborated closely with the FLEG process.

FOREST II built upon relationships established during the first phase of the Project (2000-2005). The Project created a dialogue between different forestry institutes, non-profit organizations and associations, krai administration, businesses and other groups. Winrock International facilitated the process for uniting partner efforts, providing technical assistance and coordinating dialogue of different groups with the Federal and regional authorities.

Background. This project was a 10-month extension to the Forest Resources and Technologies (FOREST) Project awarded to Winrock International, in partnership with Chemonics and the Heron Group, on July 21, 2000. This five-year project was based in Khabarovsk, Russia, and was implemented July 2000 - July 2005 in five regions of Russia Far East and Siberia. Initially the major goals of the project were to reduce the threat of global climate change and preserve biodiversity by promoting sustainable forest management and preserving Russian forests as a globally important carbon sink and critical habitat for rare and endangered species. The project adapted to a changing environment and the goal shifted to improving economic development through improving natural resource management.

The FOREST Project achieved the goal by focusing on four technical components: forest fire prevention, pest management, non-timber forest products and secondary wood processing, and renewable energy alternatives. Three crosscutting areas (forest policy and legal reform; applied forestry research; and a grant/loan program) supported the technical components. The program worked in five primary regions - Khabarovsk, Sakhalin, Primorye, Irkutsk, and Krasnoyarsk. By the end of the project, activities extended to Khakassia, Tomsk and several programs were adopted at the Federal Level.

The final FOREST Advisory Council Meeting carried out in December 2004 in Moscow identified the project's success with senior members of USAID and federal officials of the Russian Government present, both from the regions as well as those from Moscow. Russian Federal forestry officials commented particularly on the project's ability to draw together different groups of specialized individuals in natural resource management, and this was deeply appreciated by the Federal Forest Agency taking into consideration the current conditions of reforms in the forest sector.

During this meeting, it was noted that the Russian forestry management system is undergoing a process of serious change, stressing integration into the global economic environment, and as a result, this would require a key focus on identifying and attempting to solve issues for optimization of forestry resources. Issues such as rampant illegal logging and the lack of a certification system hinder economic and civil society development in Russia. Furthermore, it was noted that during this time when the Russian Government would look at process

improvement to the Forestry Code, particularly important would be the issue of balancing economic growth with developing policies supportive toward protecting the forest and overall environment.

Current factors such as an inability to even speak of illegal logging due to the high level of corruption, as well as overall poor forest management, and a closed mentality with reference to working with communities and the local population by forestry officials such that people were not even aware of these problems, all contributed to increased economic and civil society development restraints being placed upon the Russian Far East, a region which is dependent upon proper and sustainable usage of its natural resources. Illegal logging was clearly growing and the government wanted to begin a program to counter this issue.

At the FOREST Final Meeting, members of the Russian Government indicated that FOREST should begin a pilot program focused around the community issue of illegal logging, certification and educating the public on these issues. Khabarovsk Krai was selected for this pilot work and a 10-month extension was issued to the FOREST Project (FOREST II), and the original components closed. Focus of this 10-month extension was purely based around the issue of Forestry Policy and Population Education on a civil society level primarily on the issue of illegal logging, certification and the World Bank's FLEG (Forestry Law Enforcement and Governance) Program.

This Final Report summarizes the activities, lessons learned and legacy of the FOREST II Project 10-month extension phase from July 21, 2005 to May 31, 2006.

III. FOREST II Approach

The implementation of the second phase of FOREST applied methods developed from the first phase of the Project (2000-2005). Recognizing the local capacity, we used only Russian expertise. The Project engaged Russian trainers in developing public advocacy events and sharing information with community leaders, as well as NGOs and youth organizations. We learned that people must feel passionate about a particular issue, and this became clear once people were educated on the issue of illegal logging and how it affects them. People became involved once they learned about the issues, simply because the issue mattered to them and their community. This involvement was manifested in children and adults taking part in informational sessions and public hearings, and NGOs taking up the cause to prevent illegal logging.

A dialogue of illegal logging -- both at the regional and federal level -- happened for the first time under this project. Previously, this issue was never permitted to be discussed on television nor out in the open, due to the high level of corruption. Under the original FOREST Project we were told repeatedly in some regions that Russia did not have an illegal logging problem. Over time, however, it became a topic of discourse with the issue becoming more openly discussed by the end of the original FOREST.

FOREST II then worked in collaboration with the Regional and Federal Russian Government to change this perception so it may be more openly discussed, with PSAs and other coverage on

television addressing the severe issue of illegal logging. FOREST II worked directly with the local administration and forestry agency to develop an action plan that would institutionalize the solutions of illegal logging within the government as FOREST II phases out, and the Russian Government continues to work on the issue today. FOREST II was able to take this work to a higher level by identifying certification systems to verify legally harvested timber and educate the ministry and regions as well as companies in the necessity of this process. We promoted accepted standards amongst western countries which would also promote more legal measures within Russia when timber is legally harvested under a defined process with certification.

FOREST II was able facilitate and help establish VLT (Verification of Legal Timber) certification, which allowed Khabarovsk Krai to become the first region to move toward FLEG (Forestry Law Enforcement Governance) principles. Our approach was to first have the Ministry buy into the necessity of a certification process in order to be able to continue to sell timber abroad as more countries now are only allowing trade with legally harvested timber. FOREST II then took three key forestry experts from Khabarovsk Krai to the United States to learn about the different certification methods used. It was then Khabarovsk Krai that made the formal step in beginning a certification process for the krai, working jointly with a newly created Russian Far East Certification Center, located in Khabarovsk. This work has now been institutionalized into the Certification Center and the Khabarovsk Krai and they now are proceeding with VLT as envisioned in the plan established by FOREST II.

IV. Project Management and Administration

The project focused only on Khabarovsk Krai and maintained an office in Khabarovsk for ten months and a single representative in Moscow for six months. A senior Russian forestry specialist managed the office in Moscow to coordinate with the Federal government. After six months, the work then shifted exclusively to Khabarovsk. The project continued to use primarily Russian expertise, supported by an administrative team including accountants, contract managers, and translation/interpretation expertise. The project was supported by a part-time U.S. program manager and administrative assistant who provided backup on the Certification Study Tour to the United States.

A. Phase II Advisory Council

Winrock developed an Advisory Council (AC) with representatives from Khabarovsk who helped FOREST II coordinate on-going activities in Khabarovsk region and to engage local administration, as well as the Regional Forestry Agency. This council was comprised of primarily regional representatives from the Forest Agency, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Natural Resources, and Ministry of Timber and Forest Service Department responsible for forestry management in the Khabarovsk Krai region.

The Council met in July 2005 and in May 2006 to coordinate and oversee the project's activities and results. The Council approved the second phase work plan, and changes in workplan and received quarterly updates on the work. The Advisory Council had an extremely important role in the project to ensure targets were achieved and the project was meeting needs in Russia. It also brought the

Russians together to discuss issues. The Advisory Council members were, in many cases, formerly with the regional administration and/or the forestry agency, which has enabled the project to build on previously established relationships to work closely with government and lead to institutionalization of the work.

B. Key Partners – Phase II Extension

Under this 10 month extension, FOREST II coordinated its work with:

- Khabarovsk Krai Administration
- Federal Forest Agency
- Khabarovsk Regional Ministry of Economic Development
- Khabarovsk Regional Ministry of Natural Resources
- Khabarovsk Regional Ministry of Timber Industry
- Khabarovsk Regional Forest Agency
- Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service in Khabarovsk region
- Far Eastern Economic Research Institution
- Far Eastern Forestry Research Institute
- Far East Forest Certification Center
- Khabarovsk Technical University
- Khabarovsk Institute of Environment and Ecology
- Khabarovsk Branch of All Russia Nature Protection Society
- Interregional Ecological Non Government Organization “Ecodal”
- Khabarovsk Ecological and Biological Youth Center
- FLEG Initiative
- WWF - World Wildlife Fund
- World Bank

V. FOREST II Task Objectives

The overarching goal of this 10-month extension was to strengthen the institutional framework for addressing the challenges facing the forests of Khabarovsk Krai. During our Forest II Advisory Council Meeting during the summer of 2005, the following areas were determined to be key focus areas warranting work under this project to achieve the overarching goal.

Objective A: To assist in increasing knowledge of the public in adopting regulations in forest management

1. Introduction

The economy of the Russian Far East is highly dependent on natural resources, and forest sector reforms greatly affect the economies and social life (quality of life) of rural people. However, many of the people in rural communities are not always aware of the level, significance and consequences of legislative changes and how it will affect them and their community. Indeed, in many cases, communities often underestimate the value of forests they have, and simply do not realize the dependence of these forests to their life and well-being. Local populations have not

traditionally been informed and have not participated in governance of natural resources. This is in part due to the fact that very often government officers lack skills in working with ordinary citizens and are reluctant to offer access to stakeholders in regulating natural resources. In addition, often leaseholders and timber companies ignore local community needs and problems, thereby creating an atmosphere of conflict and distrust.

It is expected that current reforms such as the Law on Local Self Governance #131 will offer opportunities for the local population to participate in forestry governance and become active members of a democratic society; this will lead to broader access of stakeholders and their overall participation in the process of adopting new regulations in forest management, which in the end should affect their lives in a positive manner. In addition, Federal Law #199 conveys all forest management duties to now be delegated to the regions and that these regions are now obligated to develop their own regulations on forest management. Communities will be able to understand the richness of their vast resources (as they will ultimately now be managed in the regions) and to understand how these resources lead to tax revenue which fund social services supporting their communities. Without this, these communities face vast challenges as state and regional subsidies formerly offered are now expected to be discontinued.

The objective of this component was to provide the public with communication and information, inform the local communities about the law so they could learn information about the reforms in forestry and assist in developing an open dialogue between the local population and structures governing natural resources with specific reference to forest lands.

2. Deliverables, Results and Impact

Results of this component are summarized below:

- Educated population and local government, learning to solicit and offer alternative opinions and become active players on equal grounds to discuss and decide issues regarding illegal logging.
- Conducted 10 training seminars and 12 public advocacy campaigns in both the city of Khabarovsk as well as within remote forest communities of Khabarovsk Krai.
- Engaged 106 NGO's active players, 16 logging companies, 66 representatives from federal and regional government, 1640 youth and local communities' population, and 93 indigenous people that were directly involved in these FOREST II advocacy programs. Participants not only learned about reforms in the forest sector and received new knowledge regarding international, Federal and regional initiatives on illegal logging prevention, but also learned advocacy skills. During discussions participants freely expressed their opinions on the different aspects of forest reforms and shared ideas for forest management improvement.
- Created a forum for the general public to learn about and discuss environmental issues by developing a website that covers issues from the new Forest Code under development, as well as reforms in the forestry sector, and provided a forum for open discussion of forest policy in Russia. This website was developed by FOREST II in cooperation with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Moscow office. Launched in September 2005, the website (<http://www.forestlaw.ru>) has had 4000 hits by June 2006. In essence it provided an alternate information source to official governmental websites and provides firsthand information regarding the stages of Russian forestry reform document development. It also provided an

opportunity for different specialists to express their viewpoints on the official version of the Forest Code.

- Informed more than 3000 people about illegal logging through the production of leaflets and brochures. Partners are now using these publications as a way to raise awareness about key issues. Thus we have succeeded in not only raising awareness to this issue but also institutionalizing a process so that this will work continue without FOREST II. Ecological youth groups now conduct public advocacy events across the Khabarovsk Krai region.
- Informed more than 69,000 people from different communities of Khabarovsk and other regions of Russian Federation learned about illegal logging through additional public awareness campaigns such as campaigns that provided information about the forest sector reforms, illegal logging and how to prevent illegal logging, controls for the trade of wood and sustainable forest management.
- Developed “*Collaboration of the Public and Federal / Regional Agencies Responsible for Regulating, Planning, and Managing Forest Lands*” which recommended how to create a more effective Federal Forest agency and Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service of Khabarovsk Krai. The document informs government officials how to use recommendations of the public to develop a relationship of trust with the local communities. This document can easily be used in other regions of Russian Federation.

Objective. A To assist in increasing knowledge of the public in adopting regulations in forest management					
Indicator	Previous	Final Q	Total	Target	Note
Number of people informed about Forest Code regulations, including NGOs, youth and teenagers	69,376	220	69596	69000	Completed
Recommendations on collaboration with non-profit organizations, local government and leaseholders in forest management submitted for consideration to Federal Forestry Agency	0	1	1	1	Completed
Website developed informing on the work of the Forest Code and the reforms in forest management	0	1	1	1	Completed

3. Method and Approach

To achieve the goal, the Project simultaneously reached out to multiple groups (NGOs) and worked with the youth population. Using local Russian expertise and organizations, specialized in public relations and communications, and RFE NGOs, we conducted information and education campaigns, roundtable discussions and seminars. The tools developed are both effective and replicable to involve the population in forest resources management.

Key partners for this effort included Khabarovsk Regional Forestry Agency, local leaders, NGOs and youth organizations such as Ecodal, Khabarovsk branch of All Russia Nature Protection Society, Khabarovsk Ecological and Biological Youth Center, and Far East Forest Certification Center.

In collaboration Khabarovsk Regional Forest Agency, the project facilitated public events, including roundtables, public hearings, educational plays and skits, etc. in different communities throughout the krai. In this effort, we engaged communities, not only making them aware and educating them on the issues but also providing venues for involvement. The agency used these public meetings to inform citizens about other issues associated with forestry and their communities such as fire safety, but it is now leading to getting people involved.

FOREST II facilitated roundtable discussions on issues of illegal logging and sustainable forestry management in the community as well as public advocacy events in six districts of Khabarovsk region and within the city of Khabarovsk during this short period. At least three advocacy roundtable discussions were carried out in the forest communities, such as Vanino located more than 400 km away from Khabarovsk city. The communities were throughout the krai, including the indigenous region. These events focused on educating people on the importance of their forest to their community, how they can become involved and why they should be involved in caring about their local forest. It also educated them on the most severe problem affecting the Russian Far East – Illegal Logging.

The public events, roundtable discussions and seminars were made available to a wide range of groups including state natural resource management managers, timber industry business executives, NGOs, youth, indigenous people and the general public from remote forest communities. This allowed us to build up partnerships between these groups, receive their feedback on problems, and make people aware of each other's concerns.

4. Legacy

The Khabarovsk Branch of All Russia Nature Protection Society developed a methodology for conducting public advocacy events dedicated to illegal logging and methods on conducting sustainable forest resources management. This methodology has been applied during three advocacy campaigns and has been improved based on lessons learned. This methodology includes targeting different groups while observing regional aspects of the timber industry. A Champion or Facilitator then begins an interactive dialogue with the audience which gets everyone involved. People are able to cite their opinions and others can then comment on those ideas.

Institutionalization then occurred when Khabarovsk Branch of All Russia Nature Protection Society started conducting public advocacy events against illegal logging without FOREST II assistance and shared this expertise with other public organizations. The methodology is flexible and allows for incorporating new elements and information along with new changes in forest legislation or new regulations on both Federal and regional levels as adopted.

Furthermore, the Khabarovsk Ecological and Biological Youth Center has developed a scenario and role-play in which the students/children talk to the audience about the negative aspects of illegal logging, consequences of poor forest practices and how it all impacts their local communities. The play is informative and also touches an emotional level. People react quite positively to the play, learning the importance of sustainable forest management.

The play has become well-known in the Khabarovsk Krai region. After introducing the play in four districts of the region and in the city of Khabarovsk, the Ecological and Biological Youth Center started receiving invitations to carry out the play at different public events in the region. The Khabarovsk Forest Agency proposed to now cooperate with the center engaging this youth NGO not only to address problems of illegal logging but also will now look at other issues. The play has been one of the most successful ways of delivering information, especially for children and youth. The Ecological and Biological Youth Center now conducts the on its own – without FOREST II support.

Inter-regional Ecological NGO “Ecodal” has been involved in setting up roundtable advocacy discussions on illegal logging and negligent forest practices with representatives of forest communities. “Ecodal” expanded its experience in setting up of public roundtables and advocacy campaigns in very remote forest communities. In this process, they learned that local communities do want to be involved in the management of their natural resources. At the same time, many people were unsure how to become involved and did not know about the emergence of the new Law #131.

“Ecodal” developed a training curriculum on how the local population can address concerns with regard to forest management practices and advocate their interests to agencies responsible for natural resource management. Roundtable discussions dedicated to sustainable forest management and illegal logging problems were then implemented in very remote communities such as Vanino and Sovetskaya Gavan, located 400 km away from the city of Khabarovsk. During this process, the audience was trained on how to apply advocacy methods and appeal to governmental agencies directly as well as through the court system.

These methods proved a success especially in remote forest communities where the local population has a lack of information about new initiatives in the forest sector and they also do not know about their rights as members of society. As a result, the local population now has new tools that will not only allow them to receive information but also maintain better communication with government agencies such as the Regional Forestry Agency and the Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service in Khabarovsk Krai. This has been the first step as many of these communities never participated in such forums before. Now people are more willing to become involved and give their opinion. As well, they are willing to become involved in managing local national resources, participating as active citizens under Law #131.

FOREST II worked with the Far East Forest Certification Center on developing a curriculum that can be applied during roundtables and is dedicated to sustainable forest management, FLEG and VLT. The flexible curriculum provides various modules and allows the trainer to address specific needs of targeted audiences. This curriculum has been implemented at roundtable discussions six times with different audiences such as university students and the general public, with a total of 430 people. Following debriefings the curriculum was improved and now the Far East Certification Center is conducting these roundtable seminars on its own.

Many of our roundtable discussions led to public hearings that resulted in development of resolutions from joint governmental and public participants who together reflected their concerns with regard to forest resources management. The population then addressed these issues to

officials with proposals for improving forest practices and reducing illegal logging. This has led to training people on how to address their concerns to government officials and advocate interests of their communities.

FOREST II assisted partner organizations to develop public advocacy events, informing the population and providing trainings. There are some 6000 information leaflets that have been developed and disseminated among the population during public events as well as provided for partner organizations so the work will continue once FOREST II has closed. FOREST II also developed 300 advocacy shirts appealing to protect the forests and stop illegal logging.

5. Lessons Learned

Some of the lessons learned under this objective include:

- *People lack information regarding reforms.* Rapid changes in legislation and reforms do not provide for adequate information support to the public. We have learned that only federal and regional officials have been knowledgeable or tend to keep track of pending changes in legislation and regulations. The general public is totally unaware until the changes have been already approved in most cases. They simply are not openly informed that decisions are taking place until the decision is already taken. And yet, these changes will deeply affect the regional economy of small communities. Trainings and roundtables implemented by FOREST II introduced the public to new legislation regarding illegal logging and forest management practices; these processes should be adapted by government and used universally in educating the public on all policy creation.
- *Few NGOs focus on illegal logging problems.* FOREST II revealed that there are a few NGOs and youth organizations addressing environmental community aspects such as illegal logging in their day-to-day activities. These NGOs tend to focus on general ecology and educate children and adults. FOREST II pushed these ecology organizations to understanding the necessity of preventing illegal logging through educating them on the impact such acts have on their communities. This made them passionate about the work.
- *. Ignorance on community problems is only perceived bliss until everyone is informed.* We initially found that many local government administrators (district level) and the population were not concerned about illegal logging and sustainable forest resources management until after they were educated in how it affects them on a personal level. When community leaders and participants discussed how this affected their future, their families' future and the future of the community, it became a deeply personal issue. In other words, then everyone wanted to do something about it.
- *Targeting children and youth can make an impact.* FOREST II found that children genuinely care about the environment. Their understanding and learning about forest ecosystems, simple models they built to understand the importance of this activity, will definitely grow as they grow into young adults. This will help to have a positive influence on their behavior and the future of Russia.

- *Importance of close communication with federal and regional agencies.* During the second phase we've found that reforms in the Russian forest sector will truly affect many agencies. Some of them changed their mandates and a few new agencies were created during the past year. FOREST II considers it very important for each project to maintain contact with federal and regional authorities, track changes in legislation and regulations and strive to fulfill the scope of work as it fits into a Russian framework. This requires that projects be adaptable to the changing needs of Russia.

Objective B. To assist, to the level permitted by the Russian Government, in reforming regulations affecting activities on forest lands under long-term forest lease, as well as non-leased forest lands

1. Introduction

Russia continues to transition its economy from a Soviet style framework to a market-based economy. Recent reforms, such as Law #131 on Local Self Governance, as well as moving management for forestry into the regions, will both directly or indirectly influence forest resources management. And yet interestingly enough, even though these structural changes have proceeded, the adoption the new Federal Forest Code has stagnated at present.

The Forest Code is the sole integral policy that will maintain forest policy and natural resource management in the Russian Federation. The Russian Government, when composing this new code focused primarily upon economic development, as it was primarily drafted by the Federal Ministry of Economic Development. Designed as pragmatic law, the code does not consider the implications on an environmental level. Actually, the first two drafts of the law have initiated an intense wave of protest and criticism from ecologists and foresters due to the obvious threat to Russia's protected forests. Furthermore, the draft Forest Code fails to address how the forest should be managed on leasehold lands and who will bear what responsibility. Ecologists consider these to be major imperfections in the law that will not allow for long-term sustainable forest resources management and will conceivably affect our planet sometime in the future.

Initially, when FOREST was beginning the second phase in the Khabarovsk Krai region, we had originally planned to provide assistance to local governments and the Regional Forest Agency to implement new regulations of the Federal Forest Code on a regional level. This changed when the law was not passed in 2005 due to protest from ecologists and environmentalists. The issue is now ongoing in 2006 as the Federal Forest Code continues to not be accepted at various levels of the government.

As a result FOREST II focused on forest management - leases on a sustainable and continuous base. Issues identified under FOREST II have now been addressed to Federal and regional forest authorities for further implementation and inclusion into the code.

2. Deliverables, Results and Impact

Results of this component are summarized below.

- FOREST II developed recommendations on leased and non-leased lands, working in close cooperation with federal and regional agencies, scientists and specialists from the forestry and timber industry. The document created is entitled: *“Recommendations on Conducting Silviculture Operations on Leaseheld Lands.”* The team worked diligently on reforms and the analysis of new legislation, previous forest management practices consideration and potential aspects requiring improvement to regulations as a result of trends in the forest sector. This work has been passed to the regional and federal level government and the expected result, is that it will be included by the Russian Government into the Forestry Code.
- We educated the leaseholders of Khabarovsk Krai on the dramatic changes expected to take place with Russian legislation in the area of forestry. During this process, we found that they have little understanding of how these changes will impact their activities on forest lands. The document created was entitled *“What Every Leaseholder Should Know?”* We distributed this information to more than 110 leaseholders of Khabarovsk Krai, and during this process, the result has been that we have educated them on the responsibilities of managing forest land, and educated them on the Forest Code.

Objective B. To assist, to the level permitted by the Russian Government, in reforming the regulations affecting activities on forest lands under long-term forest lease, as well as non-leased forest lands.					
Indicator	Previous	Final Q	Total	Target	Note
The Khabarovsk Forest Agency improves the forest management system by identifying requirements for conducting silvicultural operations by leaseholders operating under long-term lease conditions	0	1	1	1	Completed
100 leaseholders receive information about the new rules for forest management under conditions of long term lease	65	45	110	100	Completed
The Federal Forest Agency of Russia receives a draft brochure entitled <i>“What every leaseholder must know?”</i>	0	1	1	1	Completed

The work done in this area was specifically due to recent changes in federal legislation. Now, there will be a significant part of responsibilities – formerly managed by the Federal Forest Agency – but will now be delegated to the regional governments effective January 1, 2007. This means the regions will have to develop their own regulations on forest management, leaseheld lands, and informing the public. A key point is that FOREST II’s assistance in developing recommendations and manuals for leaseholders has provided significant assistance to the pilot region of Khabarovsk Krai which can be applied as templates to other regions for further development of their own regional regulations and forest management practices. As a result, we have directly passed all this work to the Federal Forestry Agency of the Russian Government.

3. Method and Approach

FOREST II engaged RFE forestry specialists and experts to work on developing documents which would be professional and require consideration of all federal and regional authorities. The work developed is expected, as a result, to have a practical and wide usage by forestry specialists throughout the country.

The completed documents have been passed to authorities at the Federal Forest Agency, Khabarovsk Regional Forest Agency, Ministry of Natural Resources of Khabarovsk Krai and the Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service of the Khabarovsk Krai region; we received feedback from specialists in these ministries which allowed us to adapt the documents accordingly. We believe this will allow for them to be included in the upcoming creation of regional forest regulations, and become a basis for legal use in Khabarovsk Krai region.

To develop the manual “*What Every Leaseholder Should Know?*” project staff identified questions asked by leaseholders and managers of logging companies. These questions were obtained through surveys conducted by our team to find out which areas of forestry and forest resources management is most unclear for leaseholders due to recent reforms and changes in legislation. Experts then reviewed and answered the questions.

FOREST II submitted the final version of *Recommendations on Conducting Silviculture Operations on Leasehold Lands* to Federal and regional Forest Agencies and to the Ministry of Natural Resources of Khabarovsk region for further institutionalization through incorporation into the Federal Forest Code.

4. Legacy

These FOREST II documents will be used by a wide range of specialists. Recommendations within the publication “*Conducting Silviculture Operations on Leasehold Lands*” are designed to assist leaseholders and state agencies in maintaining forest resources management practices. The rights, duties and mutual responsibilities of leaseholders and state agencies on the leasehold lands are applicable not only in Khabarovsk Krai region but also in other areas of the Russian Federation.

As a result, we have recommended the Federal Forest Agency to introduce this document to the Federal Duma in association with the currently developing Federal Forest Code and incorporate sections as needed into the Federal Law. Forestry experts highlighted the importance and timeliness of this information and the integral nature it will play in further development of forestry policy for the Russian Federation. This is particularly relevant due to recently accepted changes in the Federal Law #199 which conveys that all forest management duties will now be delegated to the regions and these regions are now obligated to develop their own regulations on forest management.

By developing the manual “*What Every Leaseholder Should Know?*” FOREST II provided a great deal of assistance to leaseholders by helping them understand areas that are not very clear. This set the precedent of producing documents that further clarify the government’s policies and people’s rights and responsibilities.

It should be stressed that both of the above-mentioned documents are developed as transformable templates, which will allow for introducing corrections and changes when the new Federal Forest Code comes into effect.

Clear and comprehensible rules will allow leaseholders to understand how they must engage in business and secure a profit. It will also eliminate conflicts between regional and federal authorities, guarantee stable work for forest leaseholders and through profit continue to provide employment to forest communities. In essence, sustainable forest resource practices will ensure that the forests are there to continue to strengthen these communities years from now.

And, by following these recommendations leaseholders will be able to ensure protection of the forests, wildlife and fish habitats.

5. Lessons Learned

- *The impact of legislation is difficult to anticipate.* It was very difficult for our forestry professionals to determine trends with this rapidly changing Russian forest legislation. This actually allowed for FOREST II specialists to be creative in their work and consider changes almost from a ‘game theory’ perspective. These specialists employed the most effective methods in forest management and appreciated the opportunity to participate and make their comments heard at both the regional and federal levels.
- *Working with Russian government can produce results.* Due to changes in the Russian forest industry, some new agencies were established. For example the Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service in Khabarovsk region was established in 2005 and FOREST II immediately began to involve its specialists in our work with the goal to ensure institutionalization and gather as much expertise from different authorities as possible.
- *Mixed teams work best.* A multicultural team of experts was established to ensure wider participation, and a better overall result. This allowed for developing high quality results. However we noted that in some cases high-level forestry specialists don’t consider NGO practitioners to be highly knowledgeable of relevant issues, possibly due to a lack of a scientific background, and this is something that must be worked on over time.
- *Russia still retains a strong element of Federal Government control even while delegating responsibility to the regions.* First, our work disclosed facts that the Russian legislation contains severe gaps, and imperfections which have remained since the old Soviet system. While the market economy requires introduction of new approaches most especially in the regulation of resource-based industries, the approach must consider forest resources as part of a broader complex mechanism of natural resources management (in particular protecting the environment). Furthermore, forest management as it exists in today’s Russia still retains a strong element of control from the Federal Government which is inappropriate in a market economy. As a result, this seems to inhibit any true possibility for establishing partner relations between forest land users and forest land holders, which does not stimulate the further development of long term leases, and overall economic development of forest communities.

Objective C. To assist in reducing illegal logging practices in the Russian Far East and implementing the FLEG process**1. Introduction**

Illegal logging is one of the most severe problems now existing in the Russian forest industry. Previously, this issue could not be even discussed due to the level of corruption. Within the past several years, this problem has become recognized by President Putin as a growing problem which warrants further attention and resources in the Russian Federation. Illegal logging in Russia not only distorts Russian wood markets, but also creates a negative influence on world markets most especially those that practice sound forest management practices.

The Russian government has now officially declared its adherence to international initiatives focused on developing international mechanisms for preventing illegal logging. In actuality Russia was one of the first countries to join the international FLEG (Forestry Law Enforcement Governance) process with the aim to eliminate trade in illegally harvested timber and wood products.

By joining FLEG, Russia has made a commitment to develop measures for illegal logging prevention. Due to the severity of the problem, Russia now faces a very challenging task. As mentioned, up until two years ago, illegal logging was not generally recognized as a serious problem that affected the economy and quality of life. At present, federal and regional authorities have recognized the seriousness and begun to understand and reduce the factors now contributing to illegal logging. Government agencies, in cooperation with the timber industry, NGOs and the public, are developing measures to improve forest management and prevent illegal logging by specifically improving monitoring and control, maintaining adequate cash flow between regions and Federal Center, reducing corruption, and identifying needed law enforcement. FOREST II worked at both the Federal and Regional level to coordinate and begin FLEG, and tie the process into a key region of Russia, Khabarovsk Krai, as a pilot.

The project activities were focused on identifying tools that will further motivate business in implementing sustainable forest management and help governmental organizations to enhance regulations in forestry and improve methods for monitoring of forest resources. Such tools like Voluntary Forest Certification, Verification of Legal Timber (VLT) and Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) were the key elements under Phase II of this project.

2. Deliverables, Results and Impact

Results of FOREST II's work analyzing the current amount of illegal logs leaving the krai have provided a more accurate and factual information base for the government, NGOs and FLEG to work with. This information has started to become a basis for forming recommendations to prevent illegal logging. Some of the results are summarized below:

- More than 520 specialists in forest management and representatives of the general public were involved in these discussions on illegal logging and methods that reduce and eliminate the practice. Forty-seven managers from 18 timber industry companies have been trained in

the application of forest voluntary certification, VLT program methods, and FLEG. Informing forest specialists on international market initiatives indeed provided new knowledge and prepared grounds for further reforming RFE timber companies manner of work, and in general improving overall forest management.

- Informed Khabarovsk Krai staff about the role of the government after FOREST II Project Manager, Evgeny Zabubenin, took part in the 63rd session of the UN Timber Committee and seminar “Forest Certification – Do Governments Have a Role?” in Geneva, Switzerland. Present conditions of the market, prospects under development in world timber markets as well as the role governments play in the development voluntary certification of the forest companies was discussed at the forum. Publications and valuable market data were collected and brought to the Khabarovsk Regional Ministry of Timber for consideration on developing a regional wood trade policy with China. FOREST II presented the major aspects of this forum to managers of logging companies during a seminar dedicated to certification issues.
- Publications in the regional newspapers and magazines as well as broadcasts through the local television stations allowed us to reach people in very remote areas and even in other regions of Russian Federation. This means we have reached a very broad part of the population in the Russian Far East (numbers cited in the first section of this report).
- A Public Service Announcement (PSA) focused on illegal logging was developed for the Khabarovsk Krai region, through the television company “Veles.” The video clip informs citizens of the negative consequences of illegal logging. FOREST II has now transferred this PSA to the regional administration of Khabarovsk Krai as well as other local television stations and regional NGOs for wider broadcasting and usage during public advocacy events. This once again has been part of our institutionalization process.
- Informed key representatives from Khabarovsk about the certification trends in the US with a study tour to Oregon where they met companies and NGOs working on certification issues.
- Informed more than 2500 people, the general public, youth organizations, local government and ecological NGOs, about certification, VLT Program and FLEG.
- Representatives of 18 Khabarovsk Krai timber industry companies were trained in voluntary certification, VLT and FLEG, and 2000 information leaflets were distributed among the local population during information campaigns and advocacy roundtable meetings.

Objective C. To assist in reducing illegal logging practices in the Russian Far East and implementing the FLEG process					
Indicator	Previous	Final Q	Total	Target	Note
People informed about problems and subsequences of illegal logging	69,376	220	69596	69000	Completed
State agencies accept recommendations on counteraction to illegal logging	1	3	4	3	Completed
Logging companies representatives trained in certification procedures	17	4	21	20	Completed

3. Method, Approach and Activities

The scale of illegal logging that both the federal and regional governments must address and eliminate is enormous. FOREST II focused on key aspects of the problem in collaboration with NGOs and the Russian Government, which has provided a solid foundation from which to build to address this problem. FOREST II developed an analysis on the scale of the problem. This report was then used in FLEG, and tied our regional work into the FLEG initiative. As well, we assisted Khabarovsk Krai in developing a study tour to the United States focused on Voluntary Certification and helped the Krai initiate VLT (Verification of Legal Timber).

Only during the last two years has illegal logging become recognized as a serious problem; prior to this it was never considered due to the level of corruption. And yet, due to lack of statistics and weak or nonexistent cooperation between governmental agencies, it was extremely difficult to get a grasp on the actual amount of illegally harvested wood. Information provided by the Federal Forest Agency, Far East Customs Office and ecological NGOs regarding the volume of illegal wood exported significantly differed from each party. Thus our research and work here provided assistance to Russia during an integral period – implementation of the FLEG initiative.

Ultimately, the objective of this component was to identify a means of reducing illegal logging practices in the Russian Far East and implementing the FLEG process. During the process, we also identified the key causes of illegal logging, informed stakeholder groups about these issues (in combination with the first component), and helped companies move towards a process of certifying timber and working with the FLEG Process.

To identify the volume and seriousness of illegally harvested and exported wood, FOREST II supported Dr. Alexander Sheingauz in an effort to analyze the volume of illegal logging in Khabarovsk Krai. Lacking official statistics, Dr. Sheingauz used economic and mathematic modeling based on a system which he developed. He identified the influence of illegal logging on the regional economy (particularly surrounding forest communities) and the factors contributing to illegal logging. This work examined the social and ecological aspects of illegal forest logging and disclosed gaps in legislation contributing to the issue of illegal logging. Materials developed by Dr. Sheingauz were essential for development a regional FLEG program. This research has been submitted to the Khabarovsk Krai regional government and the Federal Forest Service as an important informational source and as a methodology for evaluating the volume of illegal logging across the country.

Furthermore, this FOREST II research has now been used by the Federal Forest Agency in preparing and conducting a Far East conference dedicated to illegal logging, and Dr. Sheingauz's recommendations have been incorporated into a Federal Action Plan on Illegal Logging Prevention for the country as well as a Khabarovsk regional FLEG Program. As part of institutionalization, all agencies involved in natural resource management as well as timber industry companies must observe and fulfill this Action Plan. Accordingly the forest control and monitoring systems will be improved, communication and interaction between governmental agencies has been highlighted, business and public organizations will be expanded and laws and regulations will be enforced. These activities are now expected to reduce volumes of illegal logging in Khabarovsk Krai and the Russian Far East.

FOREST II's program emphasized FLEG principles and included the following points:

- Enhancement of forest legislation and policy particularly with reference to the environment
- Developing market and administrative mechanisms for countering illegal logging
- Establishing and supporting public involvement on the issue of illegal logging prevention
- Ecological education and forming a strong culture of forest resource NGOs
- Forming institutional and regulatory means for countering illegal logging

FOREST II supported initiatives to establish a Verification of Legal Timber (VLT) program in the Khabarovsk Krai region. Further institutionalizing our work, Khabarovsk Krai Administration has signed a protocol in which it will now assume the obligation for development of this program in the region. This process is considered an important first step for certification and ultimately widening opportunities to expand wood markets for local timber companies in the RFE. VLT is a pre-certification procedure ensuring sustainable forest resources management. Khabarovsk has become the first region in the Russian Federation to create a VLT process³, which has been institutionalized from FOREST II's work. Regional forest experts developed these standards taking into account peculiarities of Khabarovsk Krai region and basic requirements of the VLT process. These standards have been approved by a new Khabarovsk regional VLT Executive Council and already three timber companies working in Khabarovsk region have obtained VLT certificates confirming their status of operations on forested lands. This VLT certificate will now make it possible to initiate export of wood to countries that follow international practices. Full certification will be the next step for some of these companies.

Through our work with the new Far East Forest Certification Center, we developed VLT brochures for logging companies. This work describes the advantages of the VLT program for the timber industry and provides instructions for logging company managers on how to initiate VLT certification and the requirements. This document has been institutionalized and will be printed by the Khabarovsk Krai government and distributed among managers of timber companies. This will encourage logging companies to join the program and sell direct to countries in Europe and North America more competitively. It also will ensure a reduction in the volume of illegally harvested trees.

³ USAID is supporting a similar activity in Indonesia with The Nature Conservancy.

In partnership with the Khabarovsk Forest Agency, Far East Forest Certification Center, Khabarovsk Technical University, FOREST II conducted seven training seminars and roundtable discussions dedicated to illegal logging issues, forest voluntary certification and the VLT program.

A small group of timber industry representatives from Khabarovsk Krai region took part in a forest certification study tour implemented in the Northwest states Oregon and Washington in the United States. Consisting of three people including a representative of the Ministry of Industry and Timber from Khabarovsk Krai, a senior representative of Dallesprom, and a former member of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Khabarovsk Krai working for FOREST II, the tour focused on teaching forest certification systems that US timber companies use, training foresters regarding application and observation of certification policies, describing the differences between systems and providing information about the benefits that certified companies gain from engaging in chain of custody practices and certifying forested lands. This information and experience has enabled Russian delegates to obtain a greater understanding of certification and apply it to their understanding of the market. This information has been passed to all the companies in the Khabarovsk Krai region.

FOREST II coordinated all its activities with officials in the Federal Forest Agency and with the regional administration. This allowed us to forge a strong partnership and work to identify means to resolve illegal logging issues. FOREST II continued to involve large groups of specialists and experts, local government, NGOs and public groups in its activities and programs. It was particularly important to bring different groups of people together in beginning public discussions on illegal logging and its negative influence in the region. As mentioned earlier this problem was not considered by the population and rarely if ever discussed in the open, but we were able to display that indeed it is a serious threat to the economy and the local communities.

FOREST II's work has been submitted to Federal and regional Forest Agencies and the Khabarovsk regional administration for further institutionalization in the region and other regions of Russian Federation. Institutionalization of this program in Khabarovsk region will minimize the negative impact of illegal logging and provide better economic opportunities for the regional timber industry.

FOREST II, working in cooperation with the Khabarovsk Regional Federal Forest Agency, conducted a Board meeting of directors of ranger stations for Khabarovsk Krai. The meeting was dedicated to illegal logging issues. Directors of the ranger stations, as well as senior managers of the Forest Agency and forestry scientists (49 people) identified the different factors contributing to illegal logging in the region. FOREST representatives presented the audience with activities focused on countering illegal logging and educating citizens on this important civil society issue. RFE forestry specialist, Dr. Alexander Sheingauz presented research which identified the magnitude of the problem for Khabarovsk Krai and the Russian Federation. This information has been presented to USAID and the Russian Federal Government. Also during this event, a Saint Petersburg FLEG (Forestry Law Enforcement Governance) conference declaration was distributed among participants, as FOREST II collaborated with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the World Bank on the FLEG initiative. A short Public Service Announcement of a children's ecological show, developed under FOREST II, displayed how to organize and conduct public advocacy campaigns against illegal logging. As a direct result of this work, seminar participants made a resolution on uniting efforts with the Forest Service to counter the rampant illegal logging taking place in Khabarovsk Krai.

4. Legacy

The objective of this component has focused primarily on the institutionalization of elements of a normal functioning democratic market economy – assisting Khabarovsk Krai in adopting international and Federal regulations on establishing sustainable forest management practices and beginning to ensure only legally harvested wood is traded. FOREST II worked in direct cooperation with governmental organizations, forestry experts, NGOs and the general population of Khabarovsk Krai region. NGOs have now begun to promote the cause of fighting illegal logging, and the Certification Center in the RFE, along with the Khabarovsk Krai administration are carrying out VLT which was begun under FOREST II. This has led to an institutionalization effect and we expect this work will now carry on accordingly through our NGO partners and with the government.

FOREST II's work – in cooperation with Dr. Alexander Sheingauz – identified the magnitude of the illegal logging problem for Khabarovsk Krai. This work has been passed to the government and is now being used to better understand how to tackle this significant problem, and was presented during the FLEG Initiative. The work not only calculates volumes of illegally harvested wood in the region but also attempts to honestly describe what the population (local communities) now lose as a result of the rampant and growing illegal logging problem. Ultimately this work has a wide range of applications to reforming different regulations and methods across the Russian Federation to get this problem under control. Federal and regional forest agencies as well as the administration of Khabarovsk Krai will utilize this material to help develop Federal and regional programs focused on sustainable forest management.

The FLEG Program for Khabarovsk region proposes mechanisms and approaches for reducing the volume and negative impact of illegal logging. This document proposes a plan of actions that will improve forest legislation and regulations, establish mechanisms for public understanding and participation in logging activities within their communities, as well as improve monitoring and control from governmental agencies. According to this plan, forest voluntary certification should be promoted and encouraged through government. The regional FLEG program also envisions involving local populations in forest resource management and improving education in ecology. By observing these points and implementing an action plan in Khabarovsk Krai region, it is anticipated that the region will be able significantly reduce the amount of illegal logging and improve its economy.

The Verification of Legal Timber (VLT) program will provide Khabarovsk with unique opportunities if implemented properly. By introducing the VLT program in timber industry practices, timber industry companies will receive new opportunities to expand markets and increase sales. In cooperation with the Far East Forest Certification Center, FOREST II supported initiatives of local business and administration and developed two important documents, the first focused on VLT standards for the Khabarovsk region introducing special criteria for identifying methods of legal activities of timber companies, and the second provided guidelines for forest businesses on how to maintain legal activities and report on all harvested wood. These documents should allow timber company managers to better understand the advantages of the VLT program, its requirements and how to join. This will make the timber industry more sophisticated in Khabarovsk Krai and increase opportunities for businesspeople to

trade abroad. Three regional timber companies have already joined the VLT program and received their certificates of compliance.

Truly, FOREST II's work embraced economic, ecological, social and even political (legislative) aspects. A primary achievement of this project has been setting up an open dialogue on which regional government and Forest Agency officials, forest experts, NGOs and the general public discussed different issues related to illegal logging. This dialogue allowed ordinary people and specialists to exchange ideas and methods on how to improve forest management methods and the local communities surrounding the forests, and proposed approaches on how to make forest management and wood products export much more transparent. These communications have assisted officials, NGOs and communities to better understand the value of cooperative work in resolving complex problems. In essence, this work became a foundation for training on how to apply democratic principles in day-to-day life. Public organizations learned methods of effective communication, exchanging information, addressing problems and advocating change. These are fundamental elements of a democracy that will live on long after FOREST II is closed.

5. Lessons Learned

- *Unclear roles within the forestry sector makes addressing illegal logging issues difficult.* The Forest Code redefines the roles and responsibilities within the forestry sector, and it is difficult to know which department or government office is truly responsible for issues related to illegal logging. During the project, some departments reorganized and changed their mandates. For example, the Federal Forest Agency departments in the regions no longer manage the issue of illegal logging. These responsibilities have been handed over to a new office entitled the Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service of Khabarovsk Krai region. FOREST II collaborated with both entities to ensure a transition, and this is still being resolved.
- *Chinese market for raw timber reduces the interest of wood companies to become certified.* In the beginning of FOREST II, not one company in Khabarovsk region was certified. However through our work we were able to lead three companies to become certified with VLT. The reason no company had considered certification earlier can be explained by the close location of Chinese wood markets which are not sensitive to ecological problems in the world. China has low ecological standards and certified wood is not required at present. Russian Far East timber companies are using easy access to Chinese wood markets which have now become one of the largest in the world. However, this situation can be changed radically if China were to stipulate only certified wood would be accepted, similar to Japan which in April 2006 passed the Green Purchase Law requiring certified wood.

VI. Gender and Minorities

FOREST II recognized the importance of involving all groups of people in this project and specifically targeted the information campaigns at specific groups such as women, minorities and youth.

In this effort, FOREST II worked with three NGOs that were led by women directors. This included Irina Bogdan who manages Ecodal, Valentina Sidorova who manages the All Russia Nature Protection Society, and Irina Velisurova of the Ecological and Biological Center.

Specifically the Ecological and the Biological Center worked with youth, educating them on issues such as illegal logging and how it affects them, their future, and the communities in which they live.

As a result of our work, we have determined that among the 2100 participants in roundtable discussions and seminars, we estimate about 65% were women and 35% were men. Women in Russia today tend to be more active in society and sensitive to existing problems in the communities, since they are responsible for raising the family. The project relied on different opinions, debriefings and suggestions of various groups of the population, including indigenous peoples as we also worked in the Nanai Raion of Khabarovsk Krai. FOREST II set up two roundtable discussions in indigenous or national villages known as Sikachi-Alyan and Dzhari. There were 67 indigenous people involved in these seminars and trainings.

Youth initiatives were one of our largest targets. We had about 1300 school and university students from five districts of Khabarovsk region and city of Khabarovsk involved in training seminars, roundtable discussions, and public advocacy actions and also received information about illegal logging and reforms in the forest sector.

Of the experts that FOREST II drew upon, eight men and seven women played an active role as consultants and partners.

VII. Indicators

Objective. A. To assist in increasing access (knowledge) of the public in adopting regulations in forest management					
Indicator	Previous	Final Q	Total	Target	Note
Number of people informed about Forest Code regulations, including NGOs, youth and teenagers	69,376	220	69596	69000	Completed
Recommendations on collaboration with non-profit organizations, local government and leaseholders in forest management are submitted for consideration to Federal Forestry Agency	0	1	1	1	Completed
Website developed informing on the work of the Forest Code and the reforms in forest management	0	1	1	1	Completed
Objective B. To assist, to the level permitted by the Russian Government, in reforming the regulations affecting activities on forest lands under long-term forest lease, as well as non-leased forest lands					
Indicator	Previous	Final Q	Total	Target	Note
The Khabarovsk Forest Agency improves the forest management system by identifying requirements for conducting silvicultural operations by leaseholders operating under long-term lease conditions	0	1	1	1	Completed
100 leaseholders receive information about the new rules for forest management under conditions of long term lease	65	45	110	100	Completed
The Federal Forest Agency of Russia receives a draft brochure entitled "What every leaseholder should know?"	0	1	1	1	Completed
Objective C. To assist in reducing illegal logging practices in the Russian Far East and implementing the FLEG process					
Indicator	Previous	Final Q	Total	Target	Note
People informed about problems and subsequences of illegal logging;	69,376	220	69596	69000	Completed
State agencies accept recommendations on counteraction to illegal logging	1	3	4	3	Completed
Logging companies representatives are trained in certification procedures	17	4	21	20	Completed

VIII. Success Stories

FOREST II Project Concludes Work With Final Meeting Led By Khabarovsk Krai Administration and Regional Forest Agency

During May 24, 2006, USAID's FOREST II Project -- which focuses on forestry civil society issues, particularly illegal logging and certification -- carried out its Final Meeting in Khabarovsk Krai. During this meeting key project achievements were introduced including the development of a matrix which will better adapt a Manual for Leaseholders to the Forestry Code, creation of a Regional FLEG (Forestry Law Enforcement and Governance) Program looking at illegal logging issues, VLT (Verification of Legal Timber) standards which are now beginning to be put into effect for Khabarovsk Krai. A wider view is that FOREST II Project introduced the local community and population of Khabarovsk Krai in forestry issues which affect their region. All project recommendations and findings developed under the project have been placed with FOREST NGO partners including Ecodal and All Russia Nature Protection Society. Mr. Vladimir Kolymitsev, Head of the Regional Forestry Agency for Khabarovsk Krai, noted that "USAID's FOREST Project provided us a path to the future, and as result we have made tangible steps toward successful implementation in Biomass Energy, countering Illegal Logging, Certification, Secondary Wood Processing, Pest Monitoring and Fire Prevention. This project will live long after its completion next week." USAID's FOREST Project concludes its work in the Russian Federation on May 31, 2006.

USAID's FOREST II Project Contributing to Development of Voluntary Forest Certification on Russian Far East

During April 15–22, 2006, USAID's FOREST (Forest Resources and Technologies) II Project implemented a "Forest Certification" study tour to the United States for three key forestry individuals from the Russian Far East. The group included key specialists from the timber industry people of the Khabarovsk Krai region. This event has been particularly significant as Khabarovsk is leading the country in an effort to implement a voluntary certification system; this will be the first such developed system for Russia. The tour included a key representative from the Khabarovsk regional Ministry of Timber, as well as one of the largest timber companies of the RFE – Dallesprom. While in the United States, the elite group gleaned information on different certification systems applied by timber companies in USA, processes, differences between the most common certification systems, how they work in practice and the benefits timber companies are now attaining by certifying forested lands and applying chain of custody. Participants agreed that the study tour has provided new insight on certification, its significance for international wood-trade and for maintaining sustainable forest management practices in the Eastern part of Russia. An integral of this experience for the Russian group was the information exchange with managers that are applying certification rules on practice and visiting certified field sites; in this manner our Russian colleagues could see real-world applications of forest certification standards being implemented and processed. Presently it is planned for study tour participants to share this experience and applications learned with other Russian logging companies in the region. USAID expects that this, in combination with working with the new

Certification Center of the Russian Far East also now located in Khabarovsk, should provide for additional impact with a growing amount of certified lands in this region of Russia.

Certification Concepts Taken to Districts of Khabarovsk – Result of FOREST II

During April 16, 2006, ecologists under a jointly supported initiative of USAID's FOREST Project, the Khabarovsk Krai Regional Forest Agency and administration of Khabarovsk Krai – conducted a public advocacy campaign entitled "Certification of Forests Stops Illegal Logging!" in the outer village of Elabuga, district of Khabarovsk Krai. Participants not only included youths, school children but also soldiers from the nearest military camp located in the region. The audience worked on puzzles and games concerning the environment and specifically illegal logging, watched a performance by local children and learned useful information which will help preserve the Far Eastern taiga forest and the well-being of the region and local population. Local leaders thanked the young actors.

USAID's FOREST II Project Builds Capacity For Tomorrow in Forestry Sector

During April 18th, a seminar on forest & voluntary certification was delivered by the Far Eastern Certification Center working in cooperation with USAID's FOREST Project. The event was attended by students and teachers (with a forest industry specialization) from the Far Eastern Forest Technical College of the Pacific State University. Students learned that forest certification enables tighter control and management of logging and provides a system to monitor the environment. Western countries, as well as members of the global market, prefer to purchase legal wood products as it offers measures to protect the environment and establish a form of quality and equality in trade. It has been noted that even China is now beginning to look toward certification measures. This information obtained at the seminar was very useful most especially for future workers of forest industry. The event drew a lot of questions from participants who expressed their wish to have an internship program at the Russia Far East Forest Certification Center. In this manner USAID's FOREST Project continues to build capacity for the future and institutionalize processes.

USAID's Methodologies Institutionalized Through RFE Certification Center – Center Begins to Build Additional Capacity Through Youth Initiative Against Illegal Logging

During April 2nd to April 6th, 2006 the Russia Far East Forest Certification Center, under the auspices of USAID's FOREST II Project, implemented a public hearing educational session focused on voluntary certification and VLT (verification of legal timber). These international initiatives are considered as important market tools to move logging companies from the grey economy into sustainable forestry practices. More than 120 students from the Vyazemsky Forest College worked on identifying measures to control illegal logging, and elaborated on how the Federal and regional levels of governmental administration can establish stronger forest management practices. New knowledge and insight gained from this event will assist the students after graduation when they will be employed by Regional and Federal Forest Service as well as by local timber companies. This new understanding of market economy principles and international legal requirements to forest management (forest products trade) will enable students to become valuable forest land managers in the future for the Russian Far East.

FOREST II Teaches Youth Advocacy and Community Participation

During April 8, 2006, the Khabarovsk Krai Regional Forest Agency, NGO Ecological and Biological Youth Center and administration of Khabarovsk district – with support from USAID’s FOREST Project – conducted a public advocacy campaign entitled “Certification of Forests Stops Illegal Logging!” in Nekrasovka village. Advocacy campaign organizers applied methods institutionalized through USAID’s FOREST II Project, and as a direct result, 236 representatives from the local community as well as two secondary schools and an orphanage were trained on how certification can counter illegal logging and help prevent destructive forest management policy in the district. The audience learned much regarding forest certification, what it is for and how it can help the local community to develop and maintain a stronger economy and better quality of life. Children from FOREST’s advocacy campaign then received a complimentary tour to the local ostrich farm in Nekrasovka village, and they thoroughly enjoyed feeding these birds.

USAID’s Methodologies Institutionalized Through RFE Certification Center – Center Begins to Build Additional Capacity Through Youth

During March 21-22, 2006, the Russia Far East Forest Certification Center, under the auspices of USAID’s FOREST II Project, implemented a roundtable educational session focused on voluntary certification VLT (verification of legal timber) as a means to manage and control logging and counter illegal logging. More than 100 students from the Khabarovsk Technical University worked on identifying measures to control illegal logging, and discussed how the Federal and regional levels of governmental administration can establish stronger forest management practices. These students are studying to Forestry Management and expect to one day make their careers in government or in the private sector associated with forestry products. As a direct result, participants gained new insight and understanding in the need for certification of forests and wood, export and trade, and also that certification can be a strong measure for government structures to employ in managing for sustainable forestry practices.

FOREST II Leads Forestry Advocacy in Indigenous Villages

During March 19, 2006 the Khabarovsk Krai Regional Forest Agency, NGO Ecological and Biological Youth Center and Education Department of Nanaiski district – with support from USAID’s FOREST II Project - conducted a Nanai village public advocacy campaign entitled “Certification of Forests Stops Illegal Logging!” Advocacy campaign organizers applied methods institutionalized through USAID’s FOREST Project. As a result, seventy-five representatives from the indigenous local community were trained on how certification can counter illegal logging and help prevent destructive forest management policy in the district. Nanai children were awarded prizes at the advocacy event.

Russian RFE NGO's Applying FOREST II Methods for Sustainability – Involve Local Population and Create Public Hearings

During February 22, 2006, FOREST II partner -- the Khabarovsk Branch of the All Russia Society of Nature Protection -- working in cooperation with Khabarovsk WWF and the Regional Forest Service implemented a round-table dedicated to illegal logging issues in the districts of Vyazemsky and Lazo (Khabarovsk Krai). Forty-seven people attended including regional and district administration officials, local NGOs, students of Vyazemsky Forestry College. Information concerning the conditions and factors contributing to illegal logging, developed by Dr. Alexander Sheingauz through USAID's FOREST Project, were presented, and a spontaneous hearing followed identifying the importance of including the local population into this environmental and civil society issue focused on proper forest management. As a result of this ongoing work now being implemented through FOREST partner organizations, agencies and public organizations are becoming more aware of the need to educate and involve the population to focus on eliminating destructive practices in the forests to better protect this southern part of Khabarovsk region. This is a very positive step toward proper environmental management in collaboration with civic initiatives.

RFE Roundtable Produces Draft for Managing Silviculture Operations Developed

On January 27, 2006, USAID's FOREST II Project implemented a roundtable meeting of forestry experts on in Khabarovsk, Russia. RFE forestry specialists discussed a strategy for proceeding with the newly-developed draft of Regulations for Silviculture Operations on Leasehold Lands" as well and a forestry manual developed by FOREST II entitled "What Every Leaseholder Should Know?" Now a core forestry specialist group developed out of the roundtable will proceed by taking copies of the documents to the Federal Ministry of Natural Resources, the Khabarovsk Regional Duma and the Regional Ministry of Natural Resources with expected further incorporation and consideration in developing federal and regional legislation. These forestry experts highlighted the importance and timeliness of the documents developed with USAID's FOREST II Project assistance and the integral nature they will play in further development of forestry policy for the Russian Federation. This is particularly integral due to recently accepted changes in the Federal Law # 199 which now conveys all forest management duties delegated to the regions and that these regions are now obligated to develop their own regulations on forest management. As a direct result, FOREST provided a document that the Khabarovsk Administration is now required to develop and consider as it proceeds in managing regional forestry policy.

Institutionalization of FOREST Illegal Logging Prevention Methods

On December 19, 2005 and December 21, 2005 USAID's FOREST II Project working in direct collaboration with Far East NGO "Ecodal," conducted two public advocacy round-tables focused on "Public Advocacy in Forest Sector: Public and NGO's Rights to Participate in Forest Management". The roundtables have been set up in the towns of Vanino and Sovetskaya Gavan, 400 km East of the city of Khabarovsk. Representatives of local NGOs, indigenous people, forest complex specialists and local administration personnel (43 persons) were involved in discussing

key elements of interaction between forest management agencies, regional government and the public with specific reference to forestry management. These round-tables allowed participants to glean and understand the negative impact of illegal logging on their communities and assist in developing plans for campaigns and activities against illegal logging, which is part of FOREST's institutionalization process.

Institutionalization Process Takes Effect from FOREST II Illegal Logging Prevention Initiative

The FOREST II method of conducting youth public advocacy campaigns entitled "Protect Far East Forest! Create a Barrier Against Illegal Logging!", developed in cooperation with the Ecological and Biological Center and the Regional Forest Service, are now being institutionalized into Khabarovsk region. The Election Committee of Khabarovsk region invited our youth team from Ecological and Biological Center to conduct these public education campaigns against illegal logging during the regional Duma election on December 11, 2005. The youth team completed 3 advocacy campaigns during the election and now note that there presently is a high level of interest by regional authorities to illegal logging issues as well as the conducting of youth advocacy campaigns through local NGOs.

FOREST II Project Unites Stakeholders Against Illegal Logging

On November 30th, USAID's FOREST Project, working in cooperation with the Khabarovsk Regional Federal Forest Agency, conducted a Board meeting of directors of ranger stations for Khabarovsk Krai. The meeting was dedicated to illegal logging issues. Directors of the ranger stations, as well as senior managers of the Forest Agency and forestry scientists (49 people) identified the different factors contributing to legal logging in the region. FOREST representatives presented the audience with activities focused countering illegal logging and educating citizens on this important civil society issue. Forestry expert, Dr. Alexander Sheingauz presented research conducted FOREST Project which identifies the magnitude of the problem for Khabarovsk Krai and the Russian Federation. This information has been presented to USAID and the Russian Federal Government. Also during this event, a Saint-Petersburg FLEG (Forestry Law Enforcement Governance) conference declaration was distributed among participants, as FOREST collaborates with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the World Bank for the FLEG Initiative. And, a short documentary video clip (Public Service Announcement) of a children's ecological show, developed under FOREST, displayed how to organize and conduct public campaigns against illegal logging. As a direct result of this work, seminar participants made a resolution on uniting efforts of the Forest Service to counter the rampant illegal logging taking place in Khabarovsk Krai.

NGO Ecological and Biological Training Center Take FOREST II Lead Against Illegal Logging

USAID's FOREST II Project, working in cooperation with the Khabarovsk Federal Forestry Agency, and local NGO Ecological and Biological Training Center implemented a training seminar for 45 managers of the Youth Forestry Schools, as well as ecological NGO's leaders,

school teachers and school students from various districts located in the Khabarovsk Krai region. Participants learned about the negative impact of illegal logging and various methods of planning/conducting public awareness advocacy events to counter illegal logging. A round table discussion allowed participants to better understand how to stand up against this injustice affecting both the local economy and quality of life. Representatives of the Khabarovsk Federal Forestry Agency, Ecological and Biological Training Center, Youth Forestry School of Nikolaevsk District as well as other NGOs shared experience on maintaining public advocacy campaigns to inform citizens. Developed with FOREST Project assistance, the Khabarovsk Ecological and Biological Training Center demonstrated to students how to conduct public advocacy campaign against illegal logging.

USAID's FOREST II Project Assists Far Eastern Initiative on Developing Legal Product

On October 13, 2005 USAID's FOREST II Project in coordination with the Far Eastern Center for Certification conducted a training seminar focused on the "Legal Origin of Forest Products, International Initiatives, Market Requirements and Forestry Certification." Working in concert with the Khabarovsk Krai Regional Government, this seminar was the primary step in implementing a new voluntary certification and introducing a program entitled "Verification of Legal Timber" (VLT). Representatives of 36 logging companies, NGOs and government offices participated. Due to FOREST Project's work and support, Khabarovsk will be the first region in the Russian Federation to join the VLT program. It is anticipated that VLT will help develop measures for voluntary certification of local companies and ensure only legally harvested wood is exported and sold from Khabarovsk Krai.

Village Children Advocate for Change in Russia's Forests

On October 30th, FOREST II Project supported an advocacy and public hearing initiative in conjunction with the Khabarovsk Federal Forest Agency. Conducted by local children and teenagers, the campaign was dedicated to informing on illegal logging, the FLEG and forestry reforms. The event was established in Sikachi-Alyan village where indigenous people reside. 60 teenagers and children became involved in an interactive game. By involvement in games participants learned about negative impact of illegal logging for their community. Over 500 informational leaflets were disseminated and students received information from regional Forest Service representatives about measures being undertaken to improve forest legislation and prevent illegal logging.

NGOs Work to Educate and Counter Illegal Logging

USAID's FOREST II Project Mobilizes NGOs Against the Illegal Harvesting of Firewood: The Khabarovsk Branch of the All-Russia Nature Protection Society working in cooperation with four other ecological NGOs, including "NGO Green Line," "NGO Youth for Pure Rivers and Forests," "NGO Lotus," and the theater-studio "NGO Petrusha," through support provided by USAID's FOREST Project, conducted two advocacy campaigns to involve local population in activities related with forest management. More than 150 people from local communities and representatives of 55 local NGOs have been involved in cleaning forest trails and specifically removing debris in areas where illegally harvesting firewood has occurred. At the event,

representatives of the regional Forest Service explained the damage caused to forest by local citizens stealing wood within the forest. Also children learned much regarding the key problems associated with the forest complex in their region.

FOREST Project Involves Indigenous Communities on Teaching Advocacy

On October 18, 2005 USAID's FOREST II Project, working in cooperation with the Entrepreneurial Development Fund of Nanaiski Indigenous People's District (Khabarovsk Krai), conducted a seminar entitled "The Local Population's Role in Understanding and Guiding Forestry Natural Resources Management Issues." 35 attendees - mostly students - from the local community's schools/colleges of the Nanaiski Indigenous People's District discussed methods of getting involved and advocating on forestry and natural resources management issues. As a result, a dialogue ensued between young adults and representatives of local administration and natural resources management agencies. Participants learned how to address their concerns to natural resources management agencies, and by the end of the seminar had developed a resolution which advised the government on strong management against illegal logging to better maintain sustainable forestry resources, focus on developing eco-tourism and sports. This resolution has been submitted to local Administration by the Entrepreneurial Development Fund of Nanaiski Indigenous People's District.

USAID's FOREST Project Leads New Youth Advocacy Movement Against Illegal Logging

During October, 2005, the Khabarovsk Krai Regional Forestry Agency, with support from USAID's FOREST II Project began a new series of youth advocacy campaigns entitled, "Protect the Russian Far East Forest -- Create A Barrier Against Illegal Logging!" A new Russian youth team called "Earth Life Savers" has been formed through this effort, and has already begun to work in the Lazo District of Khabarovsk Krai – the ultimate objective is to educate other teenagers and children in the krai on issues surrounding Illegal Logging. At present, Team "Earth Life Savers" is concentrating its efforts in the Bichevaya and Kutuzovka villages of Khabarovsk Krai, organizing an environmental play, and having students then participate in a quiz to show what each student has learned on how the issue of Illegal Logging affects their communities. During the process, students also received information on the FLEG (Forestry Law Enforcement and Governance) Initiative, a multi-lateral initiative which both the United States and Russia play key roles. As a result of this work, a local youth NGO called "Green Arrows" has expressed interest in taking up the cause and educating others in the region. Illegal Logging is now moving to the forefront of issues affecting the environment in the Russian Far East thanks to USAID's joint work with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the local Federal Forestry Agency office in Khabarovsk Krai.

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concert with the Khabarovsk Krai Regional Government, this seminar was the first primary step on implementing a new voluntary certification, and introducing a program entitled “Verification of Legal Timber” (VLT). Representatives of 36 logging companies, NGOs and governmental offices participated. Due to FOREST Project’s work and support, Khabarovsk will be the first region in the Russian Federation to join the VLT program. It is anticipated that VLT will help develop measures for voluntary certification of local companies and ensure only legally harvested wood is exported and sold from Khabarovsk Krai.

FOREST II and WWF Collaborate Against Illegal Logging

On September 6th, 2005, USAID, FOREST Project II and WWF participated in a conference at the Federal Far East Office of the Administration. Entitled, “Illegal Logging and Illegal Wood Processing in Khabarovsk and Primorsky Krai,” the conference was precipitated by work begun under USAID’s FOREST II Project, and was chaired by the Head of the Federal Forestry Agency, Valery Pavlovich Roschupkin and the Head of the Komitet of Natural Resources for the Federal Duma, Natalya Vladimirovna Komarova. The conference focused on looking at mechanisms to counter illegal logging and establish better systems of management and coordination with other agencies such as Tax Inspection and the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

Discussed there was the potential application of Distance Monitoring (via satellite) for six pilot regions including Primorye, Khabarovsk, Arkhangelsk, Leningrad, Irkutsk and Karelia.

Currently the Russian government is looking at certification methods and further discussion with ensue with authorities. USAID’s FOREST II Project has initiated a process that the Russian government is clearly keen to followup on and hopes to fully implement as it moves forward with coordination in the regions.

Ministry of Natural Resources Takes on Illegal Logging Issues Raised by FOREST II

On August 29th, FOREST Project II, in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources of Khabarovsk Krai, put on a seminar focused on understanding the environmental problems identified NGOs, as well as state and municipal organs in protecting Russia’s environment, particularly the forest. Implemented at the Khabarovsk Institute of Environment and Ecology, a number of Russian Far East NGOs inquired as to their future role and necessity in helping Russia craft environmental policy. Important questions were raised on the overall environmental management of the forest, and tackling prominent issues in the Russian Far East such as illegal logging and pollution of the local rivers such as the Amur. This USAID sponsored seminar clearly showed that the Russian population of the RFE and NGOs are interested in taking an active part in determining the future of their forests and ecology.

Children Show What They Know About Illegal Logging and Its Effect on Forestry

During Russia’s National Forest Day – Sunday, September 18th – USAID Director Jim Watson, Office of Eurasia Affairs attended an environmental play put on by the NGO Ally Parus Children’s Group in Khabarovsk, who work in close cooperation with USAID’s FOREST II Project. Children between the ages of nine to fifteen, dressed in animal costumes and performed a play, stressing the importance of protecting the forest, for all that it gives to humankind. Following this event, USAID representatives Jim Watson and Jess Bratton took part in a tour of

the Khabarovsk Krai Museum of Forestry displaying USAID's environmental work in the Russian Far East during the past ten years. Recent additions to the museum now include photographs of former US Ambassador to Russia, Alexander Vershbow, and USAID Mission Director Terry Myers meeting with children who volunteer in environmental awareness and advocacy campaigns in the Russian Far East.

World Bank and FOREST II Collaborate in Khabarovsk Region on FLEG

On Monday September 5th, USAID's FOREST II participated in the World Bank pilot programme event with Khabarovsk Krai, displaying the new forest fire equipment purchased with World Bank funds courtesy of its programme. Present at the event were both FOREST II Director Evgeny Pavlovich Kuzmichev and Winrock COP Patrick J. Perner, with members of the Ministry of Natural Resources including Valery Pavlovich Roschupkin, Head of the Federal Forestry Agency, and Deputy Chief Mikhail Dmitrivich Guriev. Mr. Roschupkin stressed the importance that these international donor agencies have played in protecting and developing Russia's forestry resources, and Mr. Guriev commented that, "two of the most importance areas of need right now are forest fire prevention and illegal logging." FOREST II Project is currently planning on participating in the National Forestry Congress to be held in St. Petersburg on October 5-7, and expects to play a key role of including NGOs in the forum focused on Illegal Logging.

All Russia Nature Protection Society Takes on Illegal Logging Prevention Cause

August 12, 2005 a reunion of NGO's of Khabarovsk Krai has taken place at Verkhny Urgal town which is 300 km north from City of Khabarovsk. The Verkhnebureinski protected area hosted reunion. Representatives of 12 ecological NGO's, Forest Service, science and local government were attendant in the reunion. Mr. Vladimir Sidorov and Mr. Roman Tatarchuck – managers of Khabarovsk branch of All Russia nature Protection Society have been hired by FOREST II project to deliver a presentation and present a poster about illegal logging and FLEG process. The audience was familiarized about what FLEG process is, what FOREST project is going to accomplish in this area and how NGO's can cooperate in prevention of illegal logging. Due to a presentation, local NGO's expressed a request in conducting of a special seminar dedicated to FLEG.

Regional Russian Leaders Take Active Part in Directing Results of FOREST II Project

On August 2, 2005, USAID's FOREST II (Forest Resources and Technologies) Project conducted a round-table discussion in Khabarovsk focused on the need to develop regulations for silviculture operations on the forested leasehold lands, as well as what every leaseholder should know to properly proceed. Representatives of NGOs such as the Far East Forest Research Institute, as well as the Khabarovsk Krai regional administration, and Far East Certification Center and Institute of Economic Research attended and brainstormed on these issues sharing ideas of what should be considered in these new areas as forested land is made more available to citizens under leasing arrangements. They also looked at a possible range of problems as the current Forest Code is transitioned to a draft under consideration. As an outcome of this meeting it was determined to formulate a list of consultants that should be involved identifying issues in

these regards and developing documentation for consideration. Ms. Larisa Vachayeva, Director of the Forest Resources Department, for the Khabarovsk Krai regional administration commented that this work will be integral to Khabarovsk particularly in the area of “What every leaseholder should know.” Khabarovsk Krai hopes that FOREST II’s work will provide great deal of assistance to leaseholders helping them understand areas that may not be very clear, which will assist in current reforms in forest sector, as well as potential requirements that may need to be raised to forestry management agencies in the federal Russian Government.

Public Activism Hits the Russian Far East Under FOREST II

Public Activism Displayed on Local Transport in the Russian Far East
NGO The Khabarovsk Ecological Center, through support jointly-provided by USAID’s FOREST II Project, the Khabarovsk Municipal Transportation Department and the Khabarovsk Krai Ministry of Natural Resources, initiated a new public awareness campaign on local city transport on the issue of preventing illegal logging. The new campaign included mini-performances on public transportation by youth actors donating their time to display community activism, and forest protection. Tramvai and Trolleybus passengers enjoyed the performances as well as the posters created by children. Vladimir Kolomytzev, Chief of the Federal Forest Service commented, “Our children’s activism in protecting the forest has a greater emotional impact than if the message comes from Federal Forest Service.”

Environmental Activities Integral to the Russian Far East

During July 29, 2005 the Khabarovsk Krai Administration, the Secretariat of International Network of Model Forests, NGO Model Forest Gassinskiy, and USAID’s FOREST Project joined efforts to create a conference entitled “The model forests and sustainable forest territories development” in the Sosnovka village of Khabarovsk Raion, Khabarovsk Krai. USAID contractor Winrock International presented sustainable forestry approaches to over seventy representatives of NGOs and institutions, including Ministry Departments of Khabarovsk Krai, as well as educational and ecological organizations such as WWF. Projects such as Model Forest Gassinskiy and FOREST were recognized for their methods taught to the public including the practical and efficient usage of forestry resources, wood and NTFP processing, as well as activities oriented toward sound environmental management. It was noted that these activities protecting Russia’s environment are considered of vital importance to the Russian Far East.

Russian Government Ties Illegal Logging and Rule of Law Issues

During July 2005, USAID’s FOREST Phase II and the Khabarovsk Krai Forestry Agency held its first roundtable on the issue of illegal logging in Khabarovsk. Commented Valery Gariev of the Khabarovsk Krai Ministry of Trade and Industry, “During 2004, over 50% of Khabarovsk Krai forestry exports went to China and it is expected that this figure will continue to grow well into 2010.” FOREST Phase II announced the beginning of its new pilot project initiative working in conjunction with the World Bank’s FLEG (Forestry Law Environment Governance) process. FOREST Phase II will assist Khabarovsk Krai to identify issues affecting local governance and civil society development in the forestry sector -- with specific reference to the lack of rule of law -- thereby contributing to growth in illegal logging.